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DALCROZE EURYTHMICS

"It is encouraging to remember that many of the educational ideas which germinated in the years preceding each earlier period of European war survived the time of struggle and proved their vitality in the following age of reconstruction. Comenius, though himself a victim of the wars of the seventeenth century, influenced by his writings the educational outlook of a later age. Rousseau and Pestalozzi leavened the school practices of the nineteenth century. And the methods of Jaques-Dalcroze, though for the time checked in their more extended application by the calamities of the war, have taken firm root, and with the help of those who are now fostering and developing them in England will have strong influence in the educational movement which promises to follow the restoration of peace."

M. E. Sadler, *The Eurythmics of Jaques-Dalcroze*, Introduction.

The introduction of Dalcroze Eurythmics into the Francis W. Parker School, with its full and varied program and unusual number of special features, compels an analysis of its operation and aims in order to prove that it does not trespass upon the work of the well established departments of physical education and music, and that it has a value of its own which warrants its inclusion in a crowded curriculum.

Only one branch of the method as taught by Emile Jaques-Dalcroze is given in the Francis W. Parker School, namely, rhythmic gymnastics, or "the corporal study" of musical rhythm. The other two branches of the method, ear-training and improvisation, are not included in the work now given to the first four grades and the freshman girls.

Eurythmics belongs in the domain of pedagogical gymnastics, but it includes, as well, fundamental musical education. It was his search for better methods of musical education which led M. Jaques-Dalcroze to the discovery that the sense of rhythm and measure could be developed by movements of the body in time to music; that "there is an intimate relation between rhythm in sound and rhythm in the body."

The division of time in music into pulses corresponds to equal divisions of space. To illustrate this by stepping, marching, running, leaping, springing, or skipping, according to the tempo and rhythm of the music, is the first lesson in rhythmic gymnastics. Free movement governed only by music, and the habit of attention, are

the points to be gained by these first exercises. The music, in order to compel this attention, must be improvised by the teacher, changing frequently its accents, tempi, and quality of tone. *Accelerando*, *ritardando*, *crescendo*, *diminuendo*, the different touches, are all capable of expression by the body in quickened or retarded movement; in inhalation and exhalation accompanied by muscular tension and relaxation; in erect, tense, contracted, or relaxed positions of the body while marching.

The infinite possibilities of this kind of exercise will not be apparent to one who thinks of rhythm as a monotonous, metronomic regularity of beat, like the ticking of a clock. Jaques-Dalcroze lays emphasis upon the great variety of musical rhythm—rhythms forgotten by the composers of the so-called classic period. Changes of measure, unusual times like $\frac{5}{4}$, $\frac{7}{4}$, $1\frac{5}{8}$, etc., are studied, as well as more common kinds of measure; syncopation, phrasing, also counterpoint, canon, fugue, three against two, and three against four.

Measure is taught in the Dalcroze method by beating time with the arms, as a conductor leads an orchestra. The first beat of a measure, the down beat or strong beat, brings the arms down to their full length, with a contraction of all the muscles. The remaining weak beat or beats are made by extending the arms with a stretching movement to the side, forward, or upward. This muscular contraction, expansion and relaxation, dividing space, is a very apt illustration of rhythm, which is defined by Webster as "a dividing of time into short portions by a regular succession of motions, impulses, or sounds."

Inhibition or spontaneity exercises, in which a movement which has become automatic is checked on command or is changed to another movement, were introduced into his system by Jaques-Dalcroze upon his discovery that the movements designed to be executed to music were performed by the majority of beginners either a little too late or too soon. To overcome the resistance which produces the one fault and the lack of control and balance which causes the other, these exercises are given in each lesson, increasing in difficulty as the pupils attain greater physical and mental control and co-ordination. Thus *hearing*, *thinking* and *acting* become one three-fold process, as the elements of friction, inaccuracy of hearing, slowness of thought, nervousness or awkwardness, are eliminated. The mere checking or inhibiting of an action is of no value except as it is accomplished with perfect ease, in

ordered rhythm, without confusion or discomposure.

A tremendous power of co-ordination is demanded by the combination of arm motions (for beating time) with marching and accent. All note values, from the fraction of a beat to a whole note of twelve beats, must be learned as one learns the alphabet or the multiplication table. These note values are illustrated by steps corresponding to the duration of sound of the note. Thus a quarter note is a step to one beat of the arms; eighth note, two steps to one beat, etc. Half notes are represented by a step on the first beat and a bend of the knee on the second beat; dotted half notes, by a step and two points with the free foot, while three beats are made with the arms.

"The realization of rhythms," as it is called in rhythmic gymnastics, is literally to make real or visible in movement a musical measure or phrase which is being heard by the pupil. This rhythm may be one, two, three, or four measures long. It may be played several times before the pupil is able to realize it correctly, but later the pupil will be able to realize, after one playing, and will form a canon with the piano, realizing each measure after it has been played without pause, hearing the second measure while realizing the first. This form of canon is called "a realization chain."

Beating in canon shows dissociation of the bodily members by beating with one arm four-four or any number of beats, coming in with the other arm one or more beats behind. This independence of movement is also shown by simultaneously beating three with one arm, four with the other, two by moving the head down and up, and five by stamping the feet on the first of every five steps.

Equipped with bodily control, with the capability of "responding to artistic rhythms and realizing them quite naturally without fear of exaggeration," the pupil finds his vocabulary of movement ready to use in expressing himself. M. Jaques-Dalcroze writes: "The result of this education ought to be to put the completely developed faculties of the individual at the service of art and to give the latter the most subtle and complete of interpreters, the human body. For the body can become a marvelous instrument of beauty and harmony when it vibrates in time with artistic imagination and collaborates with creative thought."

The centennial of Geneva, Switzerland, July, 1914, afforded an opportunity for the world to see and judge of the place of eurythmics in art. The first act of the *Pièce Historique*, of which Jacques-

Dalcroze was the composer, depicted the soul of mankind during the various epochs of the history of Geneva up to the date of its confederation with the Swiss Republic. Not ballet nor pantomime, but infinitely greater in its power than either of these, was the movement of these large groups of gray-clad figures, two hundred or more rhythmicians, on the vast stage of Greek design. Beginning with the gradual appearing on steps at either end of the stage of the Hours and Bells of the night, the action, accompanying the music of orchestra, chorus and soloists, portrayed the barbarity of the Helvetians, the Roman civilization, the Burgundian epoch, the Geneva of the franchise, the construction of the city, Geneva of the Duke of Savoy—might against right,—the revolt against oppression, the reform under Calvin and the new faith, L'Escalade—liberty resisting the last attacks of treachery,—a tribute to Jean Jacques Rousseau, and the Revolution. After this climax, the music gradually became calmer until, amid the ringing of chimes, the Hours and Bells of the night remounted the steps and disappeared.

It is not the purpose of this article to enable readers to use the ideas of M. Jaques-Dalcroze in teaching eurythmics. "Rhythmic Gymnastics," he says, "is above all a personal experience." The most expert musicians have signally failed in teaching eurythmics until disciplined by the personal test of proving their understanding of rhythm in bodily movement; the most expert dancers have a still more difficult musical education to experience before arriving at the understanding of what eurythmics means.

A normal course of at least two years, including all the branches of study—solfège, improvisation, rhythmic gymnastics and plastic—is absolutely essential to enable any one to teach the Dalcroze method of eurythmics. This year, for the first time, such a normal course may be studied in America at the New York School of Dalcroze Eurythmics.

The writer aims in this article to state, honestly and plainly and without undue exaggeration of its favorable features, the results of three years' teaching of eurythmics in the Francis W. Parker School. After these years of experience she feels justified in stating that in spite of personal mistakes and certain unfavorable conditions there have been interesting, desirable, and valuable results.

In the first grade the child's natural instinct for expression in bodily activity is used to teach the habits of attention, self-control,

and judgment of space and distance in maintaining a circle of just proportion and equal distances. Note values, from whole notes to sixteenths, are first marched, then written on the board, so that the musical symbols which are sometimes so meaningless to children are felt and understood as movement and given their due value in singing or playing a musical instrument. Measures of two, three, four and five beats are recognized by the first grade children, who are able to beat the time as the music is played and to recognize instantly the changes of accent.

It is in the presentation of these subjects that the teacher has had to learn the art of teaching; for the necessity of keeping the pupil's interest, in a school where each subject is exceptionally motivated and correlated, is a problem requiring a vast enthusiasm and ingenuity. Since the primary object of each exercise is to establish the feeling of rhythm through moving in perfect time to music, music must govern the action. Yet little children's interest often needs the added stimulus of a dramatic or play idea, which, however, should not be so exciting as to make them forget to listen to the music. The following ideas, which have been the means to an end, are given in detail by way of illustration.

The tree game is useful for giving control and balance. "To be trees in the forest one must have long roots, growing deep down into the earth," and toes and heels wriggle as far as possible into the soft earth. "When the wind comes, it cannot blow us over, but we sway in time to it. The wind is our breath. When we breathe in, we sway backward from our ankles to our heels, as straight as a tree; when we breathe out, we sway forward, keeping always the same upright position. If we are pointed fir trees, we point our two hands together, stretching them up as high as they can go and watching the points sway back and forth against the sky. If we are weeping willow trees, we droop down until our hands almost reach the ground, and let them swing from side to side. If we are graceful palm trees, we lift our branches and let them bend to one side, then the other side, and backward and forward." The simple and melodious piece of music called *Little Study*, from Schumann's *Scenes from Childhood*, makes a suitable accompaniment for this exercise.

Measure is formed by a regular recurrence of accent, which has to do with weight or dynamics, while it is an element of rest or interruption of the regular succession of sounds which makes rhythm.

Accent is first illustrated in this way. Marching in a circle, the children represent a wheel which moves smoothly and slowly until the tire explodes. This explosion the children express by a loud stamp and with clenched fists shooting up into the air—a general outburst of energy which is thoroughly enjoyed. Afterward, when the tire is mended, it causes a bump (a stamp) every four counts, every two counts, and every three counts, which represents duple, triple, and quadruple measures. Expression of accent is important for the understanding of measure, as accents connect and group pulses, forming measure or meter in poetry. Expressing meter or measure by movement awakens and enriches the poetic impulse and explains the great apparent satisfaction with which the children chant the following jingle to accompany the movements of “beating four”:

One goes down with a bump!
And two makes a cradle.
Three goes out as wide as the world,
And four as high as I am able.

In the second grade the children learn to combine all note values and movements for beating different kinds of measure. They have a far greater degree of inhibitory control than in the first grade and are capable of giving interesting demonstrations of their work. Certain musical forms and rhythms were chosen in correlation with their study of shepherd life and the desert, including stories of the Bible. Some of these rhythmic stories were combined to be given for the entertainment of the seniors at their senior party. A prologue was composed by one of the second grade members telling of the approaching departure into Mesopotamia of Abraham's servant with a train of camels, to find a wife for Abraham's son Isaac. He tells of his doubts and fears in undertaking his important search for the right maiden and how he plans to find her. At the end of the prologue the servant disappears, and is seen, when the music begins, at the head of the train of camels, starting on his long journey across the desert. The journey ends at the well outside the city gates, where the camels kneel to drink and maidens come to fill their water jars at the well. The old servant's ruse is successful: Rebecca is given the presents sent by Abraham, and the procession moves on again, taking with them the wished-for bride of Isaac. The music was Arabian in character and induced the right feeling

Spring up oh well, sing ye unto it, we will sing and dance, joyfully unto
it, we will dance unto it, we will drink with joy, we will dance and sing

- I, love ye oh well.

— Marjorie

We will dance and sing unto it, we will drink with joy and dance, we will
dance and sing-I love ye oh well.

— Eugene

ORIGINAL SONGS BY SECOND-GRADE CHILDREN

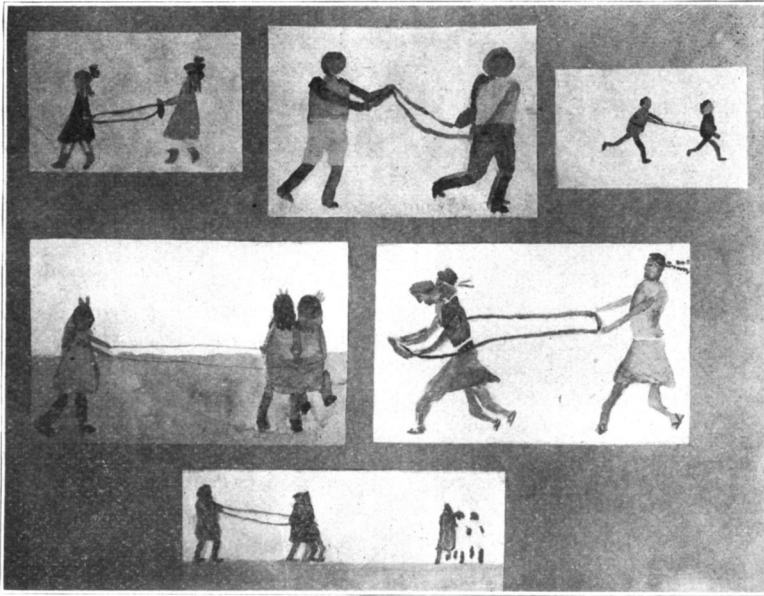
and rhythm for the soft-footed, slow-moving camels, who were all the little boys of the second grade. The maidens, carrying water jars on their heads, were represented by all the little girls. The children's spontaneous expression of joyous, rhythmic movement made the performance true art, indescribably eloquent and religious in feeling. The music for shepherds was a pastorella of Scarlatti, which the children love and which certainly helped to arouse the charming expression which they gave in the original songs they composed to express the shepherd's joy in finding water in the desert.

The regular fourth grade work is a study of Greek life, and eurythmics has here a logical and necessary place and gives the true Greek feeling as no other subject in the curriculum does. The study of rhythm continues in exercises of free and controlled movement, unusual measures of five and seven beats, ball games, discus throwing, spear throwing to music, as well as polyrhythmic studies like "The Horses," in which horses and drivers march in different note values, the horses always twice as fast as the drivers.

The first fourth grade which studied eurythmics worked out a Greek festival to the goddess Demeter, which was given as a prelude to the play of *Pandora*. The festival began with a dance of flower girls, then came a procession bearing fruits and flowers, lyres, flutes and cymbals; after which charioteers exhibited their skill with horses. The crowning of the most expert charioteer with laurel made the climax of the festival, and the procession moved off. The most important result of this experience, aside from the musical and physical development and aesthetic joy, was seen in a remarkable increase in the technique of painting and drawing. The opportunity of making a picture of the procession was eagerly seized upon several times before the children were satisfied with their achievement. The results were paintings and drawings which by their unusual animation and excellence have aroused interest wherever shown.

This tendency of eurythmics to enliven art expression in drawing and painting has been so noticeable in all the grades that further experimentation has been planned by the art teachers to prove that this kind of rhythmic experience should be a fundamental part of art education.

Eurythmics is given to the girls in the freshman year of high school. The first group continued their work a second year and demonstrated the results which are claimed for it—quick response



PAINTINGS BY FOURTH-GRADE CHILDREN ILLUSTRATING THE "HORSES"

to rhythm, control, balance, poise, beauty, and grace of movement. A plastic study of a Crescendo, a composition of Schumann, and of a Bach invention were interpreted in movement in a morning exercise.

Eighth grade boys gave a ten minute demonstration of eurythmics at the National Convention of Physical Educators in 1919, which excited much favorable comment. Their program consisted of exercises for developing spontaneity of will, co-ordination, concentration, initiative, and mental and physical control. These exercises were executed to music improvised by the teacher. In one exercise the movements of the group were directed by one pupil with a baton. In the last two numbers the music and movements were memorized, one being a rhythmic study showing muscle tension and relaxation, the other leaping and jumping in time to music. Thus the program was designed to show, first, that Dalcroze Eurythmics aims to develop the individual toward his fullest capacity for living, and second, that, as the Greeks also believed, music is the indispensable medium for such education.

This fourth year in the Francis W. Parker School shows results

more clearly than any previous year. Eurythmics is seen to be an education which trains ear, mind, and body, by means of the universal instinct for expression through bodily activity. President Eliot of Harvard writes of it: "The Dalcroze Method is a strong case of teaching through action on the part of the pupil." It illustrates Colonel Parker's saying that "all education comes through self-effort." To quote again from Colonel Parker, "Music cultivates the emotions which determine the motive and control the will. Rhythm, the basis of all melody and harmony, is a powerful means for the adjustments of the body in graceful, subtle movements, thus rendering it a more and more perfect instrument of the soul." A sentence written by Jaques-Dalcroze in his latest book, *La Plastique Animée*, completes and fulfills the requirements of Colonel Parker. "It is our intention to establish by the study of 'rhythmic' an intimate alliance between the physical and artistic faculties and to make music in its infinite variety of nuance, dynamic and rhythmic, serve to educate that musical instrument par excellence, the human body."

In reviewing the progress of Dalcroze Eurythmics in America, it is well to remember that until Jaques-Dalcroze personally conducts performances of his work little can be known of the beauty and wonder of his demonstrations in Europe. Europe, up to this time, has been the only place where this education could be obtained, and Jaques-Dalcroze is the inspired originator whom no one as yet can equal. What has been done up to this time is little more than a paving of the way for the genuine recognition which is due to this great educator. It is to be hoped that such recognition will be manifested in the establishment of institutions in this country like those already existing in Geneva, London, and Paris, where courses in eurythmics are given to parents, teachers, musicians, dilettanti, professional artists, writers, doctors, and actors, as well as to children and normal students. Such institutions should afford the opportunity of studying the Dalcroze Method as a whole, including solfège and improvisation, both as yet unknown to this country. The willingness and readiness of Americans to welcome any good thing in education and music make it certain that M. Jaques-Dalcroze will find an appreciative and sympathetic reception for his ideas.